1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
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him and quarrels among the wives. A duty of the senior wife is to cook for the husband's guests and to take the initiative in contributing food to his feasts. The feasts are supposed to be held at the house of the senior wife. These duties may at times be considered in the light of a privilege and any infringement may be resented by her. At other times an infringement may make the second wife feel that she is imposed upon. For example, the ramaken's two wives, who had a long history of mutual hostility, once spent almost four hours shouting recriminations at each other on just this score. The senior wife precipitated the quarrel by harvesting a small patch of corn which the junior wife claimed. Their quarrel resolved itself into complaints on the part of the younger woman about the extra work and the consumption of her food involved in entertaining the ramaken's guests at her house; the older woman complained of favoritism and the extra attentions received by the second wife.

Not all wives retain an initial sense of hostility and jealousy. For instance there were two cases of older men with three wives each. In both cases the wives got along very well together and cooperated freely. It was generally recognized that they were good friends, although there had been the customary quarrels at first.

It is worth noting in this picture of jealousy that both men and women direct physical and verbal expressions of jealousy and anger primarily against other women. Men are less subject to open and violent attack on this score. This may constitute an unconscious expression of the fact that women, primarily as producers, are basically the most valued possession of the group. The structure of financial prestige built around the male may be compensatory in function.

POSITION OF WOMEN

From what has already been said it is evident that the power of women is far greater than a planning of their status in terms of finance would imply. In other words, their control of food gives them power over people but no prestige.

Women are also the pivots on which many of the financial transactions turn through the system of affinal exchange. A number of clues indicate men's dependency upon women. For example, I asked repeatedly of men at the time their wives were about to give birth, whether they would prefer a boy or a girl. The answer was invariably, "Boys are good. They give our death feasts. But girls are also good. We get their bride-price."

Another phenomenon that might possibly be interpreted as a recog-

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sion of women's vigor and the covert respect in which they are held is the rareness of rape. I was able to collect only three cases, known to about five informants, and only one of these dealt with a local woman. This may indicate, however, no more than that women are not apt to refuse chance adventures. A further possible hint of the real status of women is that in warfare their heads are as valuable as those of men. Anecdotes of the last head-hunting wars revealed that out of ten persons dead or injured, four were women. However, since even half-grown children can be counted in the system of revenge, we must conclude that all adults or near adults are of equal value in this respect.

Still another index of the real, even though disavowed, equality between women and men was contained in a bit of casual chatting. Some men were tugging at heavy firewood and it hurt their hands. One of them said jokingly, "Our hands are not used to it. A woman should do this." I answered in the same vein, "That is because you don't work as they do." The answer was, "Yes, our hands are soft, so when we hit a woman it doesn't hurt. But their hands are calloused, so when they hit us it hurts a lot." A woman who was sitting near by joined in with the comment, "That is a lie. Men's hands are heavy too."

However, the questions of preference in the sex of children, of rape, and of physical vigor are merely symptoms. Women are in a position to refuse men sexual gratification and food. They can either facilitate or impede a man's financial career. An aggressive woman is usually able to humiliate a man. The case of Fuimai and Maleta, her brother-in-law, is instructive in this connection precisely because their quarrel was one of the rare ones that did not center upon finance, and the sexual element, if it existed, was not avowed. Fuimai's husband could not get along with her. He was seldom at home and she was looked at askance for her freedom with other men. It was whispered throughout the village that among others she had had intercourse with her brother-in-law, Maleta. One morning Maleta took a papaya from Fuimai's tree and sent a child with it to my house to sell it. Fuimai followed the child and took the money for the fruit. Maleta was furious, and in the quarrel that ensued he chopped down the three papaya trees near Fuimai's house. Everyone scrambled to strip the fallen trees, while Fuimai and Maleta continued their quarrel. Maleta sat sullenly on the ground below the verandah while Fuimai hurled a staccato of invective at him: "You should be ashamed! Were they your papaya trees? Is this basket I am weaving your basket, perhaps? Who always feeds you? You come here only to eat. You eat my fingers. I plant the fields of rice and corn. Whose fields are they? Are my fingers tasty? You should be ashamed." Here defi-